4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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666 Custom has made these positions hereditary and there is a formal election system. The eldest member in each house of the village has a vote. After election the headman's appointment is confirmed by the Sub-divisional officer and the Deputy Commissioner of that Division, and the *Desh Manjhi's* appointment is confirmed by the Sub-divisional Officer only.

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624 **Federal Council and The First Court of Appeal**
The Panchayat and Kulidrup

In the month of Magh (January and February) the village people gather together after a sacrifice. The headman of the village, taking the lead, resigns his post to the village people; all the other officials of the village also resign their posts one after another

634 **Panchayat**: In each *bunglow* there are two councils, upper and lower, like the modern Council House and Assembly of India. The upper is known as *Panchayat* in which the *Parganait* of the *bunglow* presides and the headman of all the villages of the *bunglow* become members of the *Panchayat*. Affairs of a weighty nature have to be decided in the council.

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634 **Kulidrup**: The lower assembly is known as *Kulidrup* in which the eldest member of each house represents the assembly and the headman of the village presides. The indigenous officials of the village described above are ex-officio members of the *Kulidrup* and every village has a place for holding the council before the house of the headman of the village which is known as *Manjhisthan*. All petty disputes, both of a civil and

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separate representation. In the elections to the Bengal Provincial Legislative Assembly which took place in 1946 a Santal offered himself for election for the first time from the Bankura Rural Scheduled caste constituency. He was a member of one of the rare well-to-do Santal families and had received education up to the Intermediate Arts standard of the Calcutta University at the mission college in Bankura. He stood as an "Independent" and he was supported by the Moslem League organization, but he failed to be elected. His rival was a non-Santal member of the Scheduled castes who was a Congress candidate. No Santal has yet been elected to the Bengal Provincial Assembly.

The fact that the dominant Santal attitude to their neighbours is one of suspicion and latent hostility does not mean that this has always been the case. There are some indications pointing to a time when relations between Santals and Hindus were more friendly than they are today. The story already related about the Mahato is one. It may well have been that during the period of Moslem suzerainty the aboriginals made common cause with the Hindus. To go back much farther, P. O. Bodding[1] has suggested that in the story of the *Ramayana*, one of the great Hindu epics, there is a hint of an alliance between aboriginals and the hero of the epic, Ram, when he made war against the King of Lanka. The reference is to the assistance given by the "Hanuman log", or monkeys, who, it has been inferred, may well have been in fact human beings of the stock from which the ancestors of the present-day Santals were drawn. In Santal folklore there are stories which describe the marriage of human beings with monkeys, and there is little doubt that such stories symbolize the results of interracial marriages.

Living as they do in close contact with their neighbours, the Santals have borrowed heavily from the ideas and institutions around them, and in some cases they have doubtless contributed to the common stock. It is almost impossible to isolate certain features in their culture and say that these have been borrowed from non-Santal sources. That which is distinctive in Santal culture is the way in which they have used a common background to conserve their tribal life and to provide themselves with the rudiments of a philosophy. The retention of their language as a vigorous element of their own culture must have preserved much from the ancient days of their own life, and has to some extent cut them off from familiarity with the epics

[1] *District Gazetteers: Santal Parganas.*